

NEWS

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American Public Health Association Supports Patients' Bill of Rights Act of 1998

**Statement by Mohammad N. Akhter, MD, MPH
Executive Director of the American Public Health Association**

Washington, DC, May 6, 1998 – "Managed care carried with it the promise that comprehensive and affordable health care coverage would be made available to all Americans. Now that most Americans are enrolled in managed care plans, many are unable to access the necessary quality care, are losing their choice of health care providers and are lacking information about health plans. In addition, 42 million Americans have no health insurance at all.

"Over the years, physicians have been strong advocates of patients; relationships were established on good will and trust that the doctor will provide the best care based on the centuries-old oath of physicians and best-available science. With managed care, profits and cost-savings have come between the patient and the physician/health care provider.

"We need to establish a new covenant with the American people. Congress must approve standards that will guide managed care organizations in the delivery of health care and at the same time will tell the American public their rights as they decide on a health care provider.

"The Patients' Bill of Rights Act of 1998 is an important step in creating a framework for assuring access and quality services to those enrolled in managed care and providing additional protections for patients."

The American Public Health Association, the oldest and largest organization of public health professionals, represents more than 50,000 members from over 50 public health occupations. Managed care will be the theme of APHA's 126th Annual Meeting, November 15-19, 1998, in Washington, DC.

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